

COMMUNICATIONS CONT'D

Letter to the Editors

In the mid-seventies the *Red Cell Free Press* came into existence because two enthusiastic immunohematologists, Sandy Ellisor and Marion Reid, who worked at the Central California Red Cross Region in San Jose, had a vision. They wanted Red Cross Reference Laboratories all over the country to exchange information and ideas. Their proposal to provide a newsletter several times a year to each regional reference laboratory was readily approved by National Headquarters, who recognized the value of promoting education in the regions. What better way to inform and educate reference laboratory staff than to have an exchange of information in the form of a newsletter! Indeed, Dr. Tibor Greenwalt, then the Director of the American National Red Cross, was pleased to learn that a channel for serologic information exchange was being planned, and he submitted an essay for the first issue. He recognized that reference laboratories were a valuable resource for resolving complex antibody problems, initiating family studies to produce new data of scientific interest, and identifying rare donors to add to the National Rare Donor Registry. His advice at that seminal stage was to “. . . keep the lines of communication humming.”

With Marion's and Sandy's impetus, hard work, and input, and with coordination at Headquarters, the newsletter took shape. It served as an excellent forum to announce upcoming meetings of interest to reference laboratory staff, to share minutes of reference laboratory committee meetings, to present unusual case studies, to provide procedural tips, and to share formulas for the preparation of reagents. It also served as a source of references for immunohematology topics, provided a current literature review, and challenged the knowledge of the reader with blood group serology-related crossword puzzles. Regional

reference laboratories were no longer working in a vacuum, and camaraderie among reference laboratories across the Red Cross system blossomed. The list of contributors to the newsletter grew. Everyone wanted to learn more and to do more. A terrific network of reference laboratories emerged.

Those early years were a time of growing and evolving. It was an exciting time because there were so many possibilities. It was truly the beginning: we were generating the knowledge and creating the rules and policies that shaped what Red Cross reference laboratories would become. The newsletter served as a catalyst to make this possible and it has matured in both format and content to become the *Immunohematology, Journal of Blood Group Serology and Education*, we know today.

On its 20th anniversary, *Immunohematology* is no longer a mere newsletter, but rather a bona fide journal with international scope. It has many contributors from all over the world who provide informative articles with sophisticated data. After all, the discipline of immunohematology is much more complex than we ever realized those 20+ years ago. *Immunohematology* is a valuable journal that continues to expand our knowledge and understanding. And, thankfully, the goal of the journal is the same as it was when Marion and Sandy had their vision of a newsletter so many years ago. *Immunohematology* does indeed serve as a valuable forum for communicating information pertaining to blood group serology and education.

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